

UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORD CAREER & EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES

RESEARCH PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION

Our research aimed to understand the impact of the cost of living on the career aspirations, career decision-making, and progression into employment of commuter students/graduates.

Motivated by anecdotal increase in financial pressure being discussed in career appointments.

Majority of Bradford students are commuter students, so we chose to focus on their experiences and received a £5000 research grant from Jisc.

AIMS

To what extent and in what ways has the cost-of-living crisis impacted on the career aspirations, career decision-making, and progression into employment of commuter students/graduates?

Is the cost-of-living crisis impacting on graduates with particular characteristics disproportionately e.g. ethnic minority background, low socio-economic background, commuter students, mature students?

What are the implications for the type of career and employment support affected graduates require, and when and how that support should be delivered?

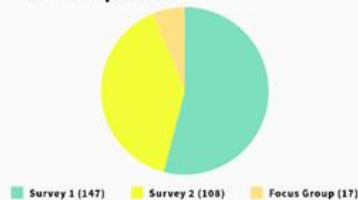
DEFINITIONS

Commuter student - classed as somebody who had same home & term-time address throughout study.

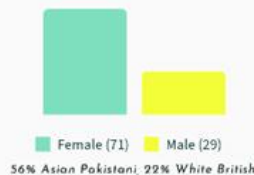
Cost-of-living crisis - refers to the fall in 'real' disposable incomes (that is, adjusted for inflation and after taxes and benefits) that the UK has experienced since late 2021'

STATISTICS

Participants:



Demographics:



Commuting:

73% of commuter students never considered moving away from home to attend university and the biggest motivating factor was convenience (**41%**) followed by cost (**33%**).

Student Experience:

87% of commuter graduates said that the cost-of-living crisis had impacted their student experience, such as their ability to attend university, purchase resources or engage in extracurricular activities.

69% of commuter graduates said that they worried about money whilst studying, **30%** on a daily basis, **22%** on a weekly basis and **17%** on a monthly basis.

HYPER-LOCAL SOUTH ASIAN STUDENTS AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Although 65% of our respondents to survey one were South Asian, they made up 87% of our respondents reporting that they 'have been applying for graduate opportunities but not been successful' in the month after graduation. 86% of unemployed commuter graduates were of South Asian ethnicity and 72% of these had a Bradford postcode.

CAREER DECISION MAKING

76% of participants agreed that the cost-of-living crisis had impacted their career decision making in the month after graduation.

The most common themes were the need to find a high-paying role and struggling to afford to commute or relocate.

38% believed that it would restrict their ability to pursue postgraduate study, as they 'have been applying for graduate opportunities but not been successful' in the month after graduation.

METHODOLOGY

150 students/graduates surveyed online twice - July & Aug 2023

Focus group held Feb 2023

Survey designed to only take 10 mins to complete

£10 voucher given to respondents on completion of each survey

CAREERS SERVICES - WHAT CAN WE DO?

The biggest suggestion from our graduates was to offer advice on budgeting to final year students and recent graduates, some also recommended support with resilience and 'life skills'.

Second, was to provide financial support, in the form of loans, bursaries or grants.

The third was to offer graduates jobs or work experience.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Ideally the next step would be to compare experiences of non-commuter graduates and to duplicate research in other regions to see if commuter graduates across the country had similar experiences.

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